

## SPECIAL REPORT



Photo by Wade Nash

(left to right) Ken Hudson, Atlanta Mayor's office; Southern coach Pete Richardson; Southwestern Athletic Conference Commissioner Dr. James Frank; Assistant Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference; Commissioner Brandy McCoy; South Carolina State coach Willie Jeffries; Heritage Bowl promoter John Ray.

## Round Two for Bulldogs, Jaguars in Heritage Bowl

**Heritage Bowl Matchup will be first bowl game played by two historically black colleges**

The battle lines have been drawn between the Mid Eastern Athletic and Southwestern Athletic Conferences and the postseason warriors have already met this year. Southern University, who finished 10-1 and won their first SWAC title in 34 years, and South Carolina State, who finished 8-3 and second in the MEAC, will meet in Heritage Bowl III at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta on New Year's Day.

Southern and S.C. State have played twice before in the dome with the Jaguars winning both times by a total of five points. Both games have been decided in the fourth quarter when Southern was able to take advantage of S.C. State miscues which set up scoring opportunities.

In 1992, when they met for the second time in the 100 Black Men's Atlantic Football Classic, freshman Duane Fuller kicked the final of four field goals to beat the Bulldogs 19-18 after a long punt

return. This past September got another blessing when S.C. State botched a punt and set up a Eric Randall to Landry Williams TD pass to give Southern a 14-10 victory.

"It's going to be great to have the opportunity to play them once again," said S.C. State head coach Willie Jeffries. "I expect it to be another great game."

Southern's trip to the Black College New Year's show was a lot easier than S.C. State's was. The Jaguars were clearly the class of the SWAC this season finishing with an undefeated record in conference play. This was the same group of players who had finished 13-19 over the past three years.

The biggest change in the Jaguar football program this year has been head coach Pete Richardson. Richardson, who had won three CIAA titles while at Winston-Salem State, brought his stingy defensive philosophy to the Bayou and it worked.

The Southern defense finished with top defense in Division I-AA.

"When you've had three coaches in the last four years you basically have to change the attitude of the players," said Richardson. "My guys deserve a lot of credit for willing to work and pick up on the philosophy of our coaching staff and it has paid off."

The Bulldogs had to overcome a lot more than Southern did to get to the Heritage Bowl. After conference losses to Florida A&M and Howard, S.C. State's entire season came down to the finale against rival North Carolina A&T. With Southern having been anointed by the SWAC, Southern knew a win over the Aggies would give them a rematch.

However, they had to withstand one of the most prolific offensive days in MEAC history. S.C. State and A&T produces more than 1,100 yards in total offense and 110 points. The game was

decided in overtime when runningback Michael Hicks scored his third touchdown in OT and fifth of the game to give them a 58-52 victory. It was the Bulldogs first victory over the Aggies in three years.

"If you would have told me that I would coach in a game where there were over 100 points scored I would have say you were crazy," Jeffries said. "I may not have a heart left but 'so gratifying when you win."

The Heritage Bowl is not without its share of outstanding performers this year. Southern will be led by quarterback Eric Randall who some think he would have been first team all-SWAC if there hadn't been a Steve McNair in the league. Offensive tackle Tommy Holliday earned all SWAC honors for the third straight year and has emerged as a solid NFL prospect and All-American safety Sean Wallace lead the Jaguars's defense.

S.C. State will be lead by the